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S.O.S. (Shades Operating System (beta .99 version))

The idea here is that Duke's shades do more than cover his eyes. They act as a Heads Up Display (HUD) that relays information to him while he's on a mission. It is multi-functional. We should give the player access to stuff right off the bat, so the game is less of an "item hunt" and more of a resource management task. Let the player spend time solving puzzles and using the SOS and less time hunting for night vision goggles etc. (They could also gain additional SOS features through downloads from the General).

SOS options will represent "non-physical" inventory items, things that are electronic in nature. Duke will also have "physical" inventory items to deal with (Medkits, GasMask etc).

S.O.S. ACTIVATION

If in "new" control mode, then a key press (TAB or "Q"/INVENTORY UP) would bring up the available options and you would use the mouse or key strokes to select the item to activate.

S.O.S. POWER SOURCE

The S.O.S. has a tiny, super sensitive solar cell in it. This allows the unit to recharge over time. Using various options will drain the unit at different rates accordingly. There would be a power meter on screen whenever an SOS function is activated (or perhaps all the time).

Shades power capacity: 100 units (ability to increase this throughout the game by the General teleporting you a bigger power cell). This will then allow Duke to do more things in a shorter amount of time and grow a bit (analogous to mana in EverQuest).

Shades re-power at X (Let's try 3 to start with) units / second. This is added to drain on a per second basis, and the net amount or gain/loss is calculated.

S.O.S. UPGRADES

The SOS will be patched to upgrade you to new functions as you play (should start as a beta). Anya Bachalot will call you and download new functions to you from time to time. Why don't you have them all at the start? It's a new system and they are writing stuff as you go to fit your needs.

It's possible the SOS will need to be "patched" at various points in the game. Our inside poke at other companies needing 10 patches to make something work right. Duke would have appropriate responses. Maybe some operations don't work the 1st time like "Heat Vision". Duke activates it and nothing happens. Then you get a call from the General "Duke we've located an error in the S.O.S. that renders the Heat Vision inoperable. Prepare for a data download to upgrade your system". Players would laugh their asses off at this. Duke might say "I better not lose my save games or there's gonna be friggin' hell to pay". Could get a virus as well and some functions could stop working or have glitches.

S.O.S. FUNCTIONS

SOS functions listed in increasing order of power drain to the SOS solar cell.

* GAMES (No cost - Have at least 1 at start of game, more as you progress?)

Just some arcade game that you could play onscreen IN THE GAME just to goof off. We could also pop this up after Duke becomes idle and he could start playing himself.

* MISSION INFO (no cost - Have at start)

This function allows Duke to replay critical info that he may have gotten during the game. Whenever you come across key information, it will be added to Duke's Log. Access numbers, phone numbers, mission instructions from the General etc. This should be a backup for when a player asks "What do I do now?".

Two options:

Log: Anything useful from the start of the game (Should limit to WAV/Voice things). Orders from dead EDF and incoming messages from Graves.

Objective(s): What you are supposed to be doing (with checkboxes for completion)

* PX RE-SUPPLY (Costs X units - Have at start, but their supply changes during game)

Direct call to the General's assistant (Anya Bachalot) to request supplies. The items will be teleported directly into your inventory, but will require X amount of your SOS power. Also the items available will change as you play the game. So you cannot get everything on level 1. Changing up the supply on a level by level basis will be good for game play.

The items you receive are essentially the world "pick ups", except instead of finding them on the floor, you have to get them sent to you now. You also get to choose the time of their use for strategic purposes. No more running over a 30% medkit and having it just happen. You now have to "do" something to heal, and you may die in the process if you are not careful.

A nasty side effect of this could be Proton intercepting the transmission and using the opportunity to teleport bad guys to your location as well. "Duke watch out! That last transmission was intercepted!!" (as bad guys beam in).

We could also try the idea of interference with the transmissions. You may have to be clear of overly metallic areas like air vents (mapper tagged?). "Duke, we're detecting a lot of metal and interference in that area. Suggest you move somewhere else before we try a transmission."

* TARGETING INFO (no cost - toggle on/off)

Just a fun upgrade the General can give you that will put info about a target (in the crosshair) on the screen.

Name / Enemy Class (EverQuest style)

Health bar

We discussed at one point having some kind of name generator for NPCs, so that you can /con a snatched EDF guy with your SOS and get vital stats on him. You would get a display like: Corporal Hendrickson, Married, 2 children, 2 medals for outstanding performance, current assignment: liberate Las Vegas. If you killed him his stats would change to: Corporal Hendrickson, Status: deceased, wife and children notified. Medal of Honor awarded posthumously.

* OPTICS (varying costs - toggle on/off)

This menu will hold the advances optics that Duke has access to.

Three options:

Digital Zoom. (costs 0 unit / second) Similar to the advanced cameras of today. A digitally enhanced zoom mode for checking things out. Allow you to zoom in (to a limited degree) and examine things more closely. Could do cool effects like Star Wars glasses that Luke used on Tatooine. Maybe reading an access code from a white board across a room. But you cannot get into the room, so you look through an unbreakable window etc.

Flashlight (costs 1 unit / second). Close range flashlight for seeing near objects in the dark. Fairly tight focus.

Night Vision (costs 2 unit / second). Illuminates the entire area better (green tint), so you don't just see 5 feet around you. Good for navigating large areas of total or near dark.

Thermal Vision (costs 3 unit / second): Best for seeing enemies. You will see reddish heat signatures that streak around with some cool effect (look at effect in Metal Gear Solid). Should be able to also see camera view cones when the heat vision is on, so you can avoid setting off alarms. Should also be able to see a "decal" of a snatcher on a body. Shooting that location should kill the snatcher and you don't get the secondary attack? Possibly saves the NPC too? Ego boost?

X-Ray Vision. (costs 5 unit / second) Would be the coolest thing if Duke could somehow use this mode to see through limited walls, and see meshes on the other side. Could make great puzzles, or get the jump on bad guys waiting around a corner for you. Amazing gameplay if done right.

* HOLODUKE (costs 2 units / second - toggle on/off)

No reason the HoloDuke shouldn't emit from your location with the glasses being some sort of "projector". Energy drain would balance.

Partially cloaks you at the same time (monsters will ignore you unless you shoot or make noise).

Activate to spawn in front of where you are. Looks solid / normal. Maybe occasional "flicker" video style (when shot by opponent).

Possibility to give HoloDuke commands (simple ones ala UT): Stand, Attack

(BOT AI), Decoy (Run and lead enemy away from you - HoloDuke runs off - AWESOME for DM play)
Uses the gun you do, so you AND a HoloBOT can run at a player and they have 2 targets
Maybe double as a weapon, with some way of detonating it?

* E.M.P. (electro magnetic pulse) (costs 25? units - instant use)

The EMP is useful in knocking out electrical systems temporarily. Force Fields, Gun turrets, Trip Mines, Enemy electrical based weapons (see them fiddling with weapons when they don't work - before they switch or run away). Should be a good puzzle element if we create enough situations for it.

* NEUTRON BEAM STRIKE (costs 5 units / second to laze the target - random time until strike - between 10 and 25 seconds?)

Since Duke is in contact with the General it makes sense that we could do so, and it'd be really fun. This would probably be the biggest drain and take all the surplus power. Could even do in net play. The deal is that Duke would call in an air strike and he'd have to "paint" the target with his crosshair (which might turn into a red dot while waiting so others could see it). The "beam" would be some type of X-Ray energy pulse beam or something to explain why it could work inside and outside. Walls don't matter to it. Imagine the players joy when they realize that they could do this within minutes of the game starting, just at the expense of energy drain.

* MOTION TRACKER (costs 10 units / second)

This would be an Aliens style motion tracker that would track character movement within a certain radius. Balanced properly with distance and power drainage and I bet we can even balance it for DeathMatch. Tracker should emit fairly audible beeps and noises for DM play, so if you are using it, people near can hear it. You can see them, but they can hear you.

THE HUD

Need to show onscreen, various conditions and status of Duke.

Direct environment damage. Need icons for: Radiation, Burning, Freezing, Electrocution, Drowning, Toxic chemicals, Poison.

Damage over Time (DOT). These are residual effects that need to be healed or Duke will continue to take damage. Same icons as above, but they will stay on screen as Duke's makes noises indicating continued damage you need to address.

MISC. SOS NOTES

Have glasses scroll onto screen when using the SOS

Have SOS version number on screen.

Have info line/text for highlighted items (guns, functions, etc)

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